

"GO-TO-BED" OR SIMPLY MATCH HOLDER?

By Neil Shapiro

As a general rule, IMSA does not correct the many inaccuracies on match related items listed on the internet, especially on eBay as there are so many misstatements that it would take constant vigilance to correct them all (even if the sellers and eBay allowed us.) But a question that is frequently asked is whether or not the term "go-to-bed" ought to be used for match holders that have a socket for holding a lighted match, since many sellers and auction sites call these types of match holders "go-to-beds."

Denis Alsford, the first IMSA member to write on the subject, posited the idea that these types of match holders were used for melting the wax that was used to seal letters and envelopes. But in his writing he did not provide any contemporary evidence for that assertion.

What Denis did assert was that there was no contemporary evidence for stating that match holders were ever called "go-to-beds." He told this writer and many others that he had searched the contemporary literature and found no references for this term and concluded "go-to-bed" was a term used after the practical use for these types of match holders was past.

I have been researching some of these match holders, particularly those made by E.G. Zimmermann and Joseph Glanz, and the contemporary literature (mostly old trade catalogs) refer to them as "*match holders*" (*Streichholzbehälter* or *Zündholzhalter*), "*lighting rack*" (*Feuerzeuggestell*), "*ignition holder*" (*Feuerzeughalter*), or simply "*lighter*" (*Feuerzeug*.)

If any readers have any primary documents that support the use of the term, "go-to-bed" for this type of match holder please let me know?

Notes on using sealing wax: There are two kinds of stick-shaped sealing wax, wicked and wickless. When you use the wickless sealing wax you should hold the wax stick in one hand and the fire source in the other hand keeping it close enough to melt the wax on the letter or envelope.

With the wicked sealing wax simply light the wick and allow the wax to drip on to the letter or envelope.

To use the wickless wax with the Zimmermann holders that allow the lid of the bollard to open 90 degrees you would hold the wax near the lighted match with the bollard lid in the open position. The lid being the substitute for the hand that would hold the match. To use the Zimmermann holder with the wicked wax it would not matter if you used the

lighted match to ignite the wick from a match in the lid socket or ignited from your hand.

There are many more match holders with sockets to hold lighted matches that are upright rather than moveable so the theory that the moveable lids on the Zimmermann holders were designed for matches that could more easily melt sealing wax is dubious at best.



Two examples of match holders with sockets for holding a lighted match.